

Those interested in the history of the electrocardiogram will no doubt be glad to have these additional references, which do not appear to be well known in Great Britain.—I am, etc.,

London, W.C.1.

MARY D. WALLER.

REFERENCES

- ¹ *British Medical Journal*, 1922, 1, 459.
- ² *Lancet*, 1912, 1, 861.
- ³ *British Medical Journal*, 1888, 2, 751.

** Dr. A. D. Waller's paper entitled "On the Electromotive Changes Connected with the Beat of the Mammalian Heart, and of the Human Heart in Particular" was read before the Royal Society on June 21, 1888, and published on June 6, 1889. The volume of the *Philosophical Transactions* in which the paper appeared was not completed until 1890, and the title page bears that date—ED., *B.M.J.*

Contraception and the Catholic

SIR,—Dr. Marie Stopes (April 8, p. 843) writes that certain methods of birth control are approved by the Church of Rome. The Roman Catholic Church has never approved of artificial contraception. It is worth while to reaffirm this, because outside the Roman Catholic Church the two terms "birth control" and "artificial contraception" are sometimes used as if they were synonymous, while in practice they are two things which may be very different.—I am, etc.,

Black Notley, Essex.

M. C. WILKINSON.

Ergonomics Research Society

SIR,—In July, 1949, a group of people decided to form a new society for which the name "The Ergonomics Research Society" has now been adopted. Ergonomics by definition is to mean "the study of the relation between man and his working environment," particularly the application of anatomical, physiological, and psychological knowledge to the problems arising therefrom. This covers the field which has variously been described as "fitting the machine to the man," human engineering, that part of industrial psychology not concerned with vocational guidance, etc.

The society is intended to bring together workers in the fields of applied psychology, physiology and anatomy, and movement study. Two scientific meetings have already been held, at the second of which the rules for the society were adopted. They lay down that ordinary members shall be research workers in the above fields and that others interested may become associate members. Meetings will be held three or four times a year at which papers will be read, demonstrations given, and business transacted. It is hoped to publish papers presented to the society.

Anyone interested in the activities of the society is invited to write to the secretaries for further information.—We are, etc.,

R. C. BROWNE,
C. G. ROBERTS,
O. G. EDHOLM,
W. F. FLOYD,

H. D. DARCUS,
R. CONRAD,
W. E. HICK,
G. M. MORANT.

Members of Council.

H. MOUND,
Treasurer.

K. F. H. MURRELL,
T. P. RANDLE,
Secretaries.

The Ergonomics Research Society,
Sussex House, 34, Palace Road,
East Molesey, Surrey.

With Whales and Seals

SIR,—I have just returned from more travels and been able to go over recent numbers of the *Journal*, and I would like to answer the letters you have had regarding the cruelties I mentioned (December 24, 1949, p. 1467) in connexion with the whaling and sealing.

After three years of research into the whaling question, experiments with an electrical harpoon are now in an advanced stage, and we are hoping that the British firm which has done most

to co-operate in this will soon be able to say that their slaughtering is at last clean and humane. The whole industry will almost certainly then follow their example for its own good.

With respect to sealing, I am glad to say I have just had a report from the Federal Government of Canada. They are now pushing ahead on a study of the harp-seal problem. By discussions with the industry and a biological study of the seals they are preparing for an early approach to international control to prevent the cruelties and check the numbers taken.

But there is so much to be done, and it is a sad thought that man generally becomes more humane only when it pays him economically. We are still savages. Human males still leave wild fur animals for days on end mutilated in traps to get skins to hang on the bodies of their women. This trapping to obtain furs for the fashion trade is one of the most horrible industries I have known, as bad and often worse than whaling or sealing, but only very little worse than our rabbit trapping in Britain, which is on a tremendous scale. And yet to the average housewife the sight of bodies of rabbits in the shops with the bones sticking out of mangled limbs means nothing. And again, I have just witnessed a deplorable exhibition of attempts to kill animals in a Ministry-of-Food controlled slaughterhouse. Progress in our standards can so easily be ended by indifference, and degeneration then spreads so rapidly.

I would appeal to doctors and their wives everywhere to use the great influence they have with people they meet to help in the guardianship of our fellow creatures of the wild. There are many organizations and plenty of judges on the bench willing to raise their voices and give heavy penalties against ill treatment of such as horses and domestic pets. But the law in general ignores cruelty to the wild things that should share the earth with us, both in the name of sport and industry. It goes on under the eyes of everyone everywhere, and we have only last year the sad exhibition of a British Parliament in Westminster discarding a Bill to put an end to the more vicious forms of blood sports.

And I would say this to my colleagues. Once you take a direct interest in the welfare of other animals they open up a tremendous field of wider outlook; and they will help you to get the behaviour of the human species, with its schemes and temporary so-called civilization, into a proper perspective. I am indeed grateful to those who have shown this interest in the troubles of the whales and seals.—I am, etc.,

Broughty Ferry, Dundee.

H. R. LILLIE.

POINTS FROM LETTERS

Teething

Dr. G. A. POWELL-TUCK (Birmingham, 27) writes: The question of the treatment of teething I have always found most difficult until after reflection I had the following mixture made up: glycerin $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. (14 ml.), sod. brom. 30 gr. (2 g.), tr. bellad. minims 30 (1.8 ml.), nepenthe minims 30, aqua anethi to 2 oz. (57 ml.). The dose is 1 dr. (3.5 ml.) as required. If left standing the belladonna tends to separate out, but this readily dissolves if the bottle is well shaken. I asked a chemist how best to overcome this and he suggested liquor atropinae in place of the belladonna, but I have always used the original prescription and have found it quite satisfactory.

Acute Abdominal Disease

Dr. J. L. TRENEMAN (Durban, S.A.) writes: The refresher-course article "Acute Abdominal Disease" by Mr. V. Zachary Cope (March 11, p. 596) leads me to make a criticism which is intended to be constructive and not destructive. In his commencing paragraph Mr. Cope mentions by name the time-honoured traps, among them tabes and herpes. I consider that coronary thrombosis should have been named, being as common as it is and, further, because an acute abdominal catastrophe is classically given as a condition to be considered in the differential diagnosis of coronary occlusion.

A Shot-filled Appendix

Dr. ALFRED W. J. STOCKS (Young, N.S.W.) writes: Dr. J. A. G. F. Rose (January 21, p. 191) writes of an appendix containing multiple lead shot. I saw such a case last year in which the appendix was completely filled with lead shot. The symptomatology was that of heaviness within the right iliac fossa and obscure but persistent "neuritic" pains in the right leg. The symptoms disappeared with the removal of the appendix.